

10) Briefly describe the results of coordination with local units of government.

The local government units, City of De Pere and Brown County, have been involved in planning for the project from its inception. Numerous meetings and continuous discussions have been held with the local units of government. The Brown County Transportation Plan, developed in 1996, identified concerns about increasing the traffic on the Claude Allouez Bridge and proposed a new bridge with four-lane capacity be constructed. Brown County Planning staff also participated in proposing and reviewing alternative layouts. The goal has been and continues to be the selection of an alternative that preserves the character of the area and maximized pedestrian friendliness in the proposed layout.

Planning meetings were held with elected officials, City planning, and engineering staff to fine-tune the alternatives in order to minimize controversy and maximize the benefits of the project to the community. The City officials were primarily concerned with finding an alternative that had the least impacts on the character of the community. Using Community Sensitive Design standards several layouts were developed that will require design exceptions, including exceptions that minimize the number of lanes and lane widths on the approach roadways.

After the binding referendum was rejected, the Mayor of De Pere formed a second Ad-hoc committee. The ultimate purpose of the committee was to do a complete review of all of the proposed alternatives and make recommendations to improve the alternatives wherever possible. The committee members came from a cross section of residents and businesses throughout the community. The committee members included individuals who supported each of the alternatives under consideration, in addition to individuals who were basically opposed to making any improvements to the existing bridge. Based on the alternative layouts provided, at the time of the decision, the ultimate result of the committee's activity was a stronger support for the four-lane bridge alternative.

a) Identify local units of government contacted and provide the date coordination was initiated.

From December 1997, WisDOT in cooperation with the City of De Pere and Brown County studied the possible alternatives for the Claude Allouez Bridge replacement.

b) Describe, briefly, the issues, if any, identified by local units of government during the public involvement process.

Throughout the planning and environmental documentation process, the local officials have communicated their concerns regarding the various issues related to this project. While traffic congestion remains an issue for the local officials, adding more lanes to the detriment of maintaining a small-town atmosphere is not desirable. Discussion regarding the width of proposed roadways and lane numbers have been primarily communicated in planning meetings with local officials and City staff.

c) Briefly describe how the issues identified above were addressed. Include a discussion of those that were avoided as well as those that were minimized and those that are to be mitigated. Include a brief discussion of proposed mitigation, if any.

The issues raised by the local officials have been discussed in numerous meetings between WisDOT and both local officials and City staff. The local concerns relate to number of roadway and bridge lanes, lane widths, sizes of intersections, and loss of parking on Broadway. These issues continue to be discussed. A number of issues have been resolved. Those issues include the following:

- If the overall local consensus is to maintain a two-lane bridge, WisDOT has indicated that the "No Build" Alternative will be selected. This alternative would involve the rehabilitation of the existing bridge. The bridge would be closed for rehabilitation for an estimated period of 11 months. Rehabilitation is a short-term fix for a bridge that has reached its life expectancy. Rehabilitation of the existing bridge will leave the City with the current level of traffic congestion.
- While bridge drive lanes will remain at 12 feet in width, WisDOT has agreed to reduce the roadway lanes on Broadway to an 11-foot minimum width. This will provide additional room for street parking and wider sidewalks. It will also eliminate the need to acquire buildings along the west side of Broadway south of George Street for the two-bridge alternative (Alternative 3).
- To minimize the size of the Charles Street and Broadway intersection for four-lane bridge

(Alternative 4), WisDOT has agreed to use the 10-year traffic projection, in lieu of the 20-year projection, for the design of the south approach to the intersection. The reduction in traffic, due to this change, will reduce the number of lanes on the south approach from 6 to 5.

As is evident by this document, the decision to build one bridge or two has yet to be decided. The issue continues to be one of impact on the community. While the bridge alternative involves a decision, that decision is driven by the configuration of the approach and adjoining roadways. As with any reconstruction project in a downtown urban setting, the issues of traffic congestion and updating to current highway standards versus maintaining the status quo are generally incompatible. Discussions regarding the geometry of the approach roadways, primarily Broadway, are on going with the local officials and City staff. The decision as to which alternative will be the preferred is truly a matter of individual preference, since both alternatives are relatively similar in cost and impact. Based on input through the remainder of the environmental decision process, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will be making a decision based on additional public input and will be forwarding that decision on to the City of De Pere for concurrence. The Department currently feels that either a single four-lane bridge or two one-way bridge alternative is acceptable. The decision as to which alternative will be the preferred alternative and ultimately constructed will be made by the Department of Transportation. That final decision will be based upon additional public input and recommendations from the City of De Pere.